Minister to Netherlands, Belgium and France recently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) (a) and (b) In order to attract more investment in the food processing sector from both domestic and foreign investors Government have put most food processing industries in the list of priority industries and delicensed almost the entire sector of food processing industries except for distillation and brewing of alcoholic beverages and those items reserved for the small scale sector. Automatic approval upto 51% foreign equity participation (100% in case of Non-Resident Indians and overseas Corporation bodies) have been allowed in the industries following in the Annexure-III of the Industrial Policy Statement. Procedures for foreign technology agreement, hiring of foreign technicians etc. have been simplified and automatic approvals are given within certain norms. Government have also established a fast track clearance mechanism through Foreign Investment Promotion Board for speedy disposal of proposals of foreign investment which do not fall within the automatic approval norms. Government have also reduced duties on import of capital goods for processed food industry and have exempted/reduced excise duties on a large number of processed foods making the investment attractive.

Ministry has published a book titled "Food Processing Industries in India—Investment Opportunites" which have been made available to the Indian Missions abroad, association of industries and State nodal agencies for guiding the entrepreneurs. Foreign companies have shown interest in investment in food processing industries and a number of proposals for investment in food processing industries and deep sea fishing from foreign companies/NRIs from Switzerland, Holland, Germany, USA, Singapore, Finland, Italy, Belgium, Thailand, France, Japan, Denmark, Israeil, Hongkong, etc. have been approved.

(c) Minister of Food Processing industries did not visit Netherlands and Belgium. During his visit to France, French businessmen expressed their appreciation to the Indian economic reforms, pointed out certain difficulties and some companies have shown interest in investing in India.

Food Processing Exploitation by Foreign Multinational Units

1100. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that immense scope of food processing which is a virgin market is being exploited only by foreign multinational units as the country is not yet prepared for the opportunities; and

(b) if so, the rationale for opening up such big market to only foreign investors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a) While there is considerable scope for development of food processing industries in India, it is not correct to say that domestic market is being exploited only by the foreign multinationals as many Indian companies are already operating in the country and the domestic investors have filed 2150 Industrial Entrepreneurs Memoranda with proposed investment of over Rs. 28,000 crores upto May, 1993 since the announcement of New Industrial Policy.

(b) The rationale for permitting the foreign investment in food processing sector in the country is to bring in, inter-alia, the attendant advantages of technology, marketing expertise, introduction of modern managerial techniques and new possibilities of promotion of exports.

Plan for National Food Processing

1101. SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the National Food Processing Policy;

(b) whether that includes area specific development plans which suits each region's natural resources; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a) to (c) Action has been initiated for formulating a policy on Food Processing. The policy will address issues relating to accelerated growth and development of Food Processing Industries with a view to augment employment opportunities and incomes, both in rural and urban